

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SMS-02 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
ACDA-12 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-08 FMC-01 CG-00
DLOS-09 OES-09 /107 W
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R 021335Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6251
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
JCS WASHDC
USLOSACLANT NORFOLK VA
USNMR SHAPE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI 2622
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USNAVEUR LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 3718

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, NATO, PEPR, PINT, UR, NO
SUBJECT: SOVIET'S REPLY ON SHIP INCIDENTS

1. THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ISSUED A PRESS RELEASE
LATE AUGUST 1 CONCERNING THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR KIRICHENKO'S
AUGUST 1 INTERVIEW WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER STOLTENBERG
AT WHICH KIRICHENKO RESPONDED TO THE GON'S EARLIER DEMARCHE
ON SOVIET SHIP VIOLATIONS OF NORWEGIAN TERRITORIAL WATERS.
AS FAR AS THE FOUR VIOLATIONS WERE CONCERNED (THE FOUR INCURSIONS
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IDENTIFIED BY THE GON AS INVOLVING VIOLATIONS OF NORWEGIAN
LAW, OSLO 3586) THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED THAT TWO
INCIDENTS INVOLVED FORCE MAJEURE, REGRETTED ONE AND ACCEPTED
THE FINE ON THE FOURTH. THE PUBLIC REPORTS ON THE MEETING
ALL NOTE STOLTENBERG'S SUBSEQUENT STATEMENT THAT THE GON NOW
CONSIDERS THE MATTER OVER AND DONE WITH AND DOES NOT EXPECT
ANY MORE SUCH EPISODES TO OCCUR IN THE FUTURE.

2. WE UNDERSTAND FROM MFA POLITICAL DIRECTOR CHRISTIANSEN THAT THE SOVIET REPLY ALSO STATED THAT THE INCIDENTS WERE UNINTENTIONAL. CHRISTIANSEN TOLD US THAT AFTER DISCUSSIONS WITHIN THE GON, IT WAS DECIDED TO OMIT THIS STATEMENT FROM THE MFA'S PRESS RELEASE, THOUGH HE GAVE US NO REASON FOR THIS DELETION BEYOND SAYING THAT THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED THE PRESS RELEASE TO BE "THE APPROPRIATE FORMULATION."

IFEM IN ANSWER TO OUR QUESTION, CHRISTIANSEN SAID THAT THE GON HAD SENT THE TEXT OF THE PRESS RELEASE TO ALL NORWEGIAN MISSIONS IN NATO CAPITALS AND AT BRUSSELS, BUT THAT THERE WERE NO SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS TO THE NORWEGIAN NATO MISSION TO CIRCULARIZE THE ALLIES, AS BEFORE, SINCE THE STATEMENT WAS PUBLICLY AVAILABLE.

4. COMMENT: WE WOULD GUESS THAT THE GON DECIDED TO OMIT THE STATEMENT ABOUT THE NON-INTENTIONAL NATURE OF THE INCIDENTS BECAUSE TO HAVE PUBLISHED IT MIGHT LEAD TO A RENEWED DOMESTIC DEBATE ON THE ENTIRE SUBJECT -- SOMETHING WHICH STOLTENBERG'S STATEMENT INDICATES THE GOVERNMENT CLEARLY WANTS TO AVOID. FOR IF THE GON HAS PUBLISHED THE ENTIRE SOVIET REPLY, THEN THE GON WOULD APPEAR TO BE ENDORSING THE SOVIET'S ASSERTION ABOUT THE ACCIDENTAL NATURE OF THE VIOLATIONS, UNLESS THE GON ALSO MADE A PUBLIC STATEMENT TO THE CONTRARY. STILL, IT MAY APPEAR CURIOUS TO THE SOVIETS THAT THE GON IS DELIBERATELY KEEPING TO ITSELF WHAT TO THE SOVIETS CONFIDENTIAL

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MUST BE THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF THIER REPLY. AND OF COURSE IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE DISQUIET AS TO SOVIET INTENTIONS VIS-A-VIS NORWAY RAISED BY THE VIOLATIONS AND THE DISSATISFACTION WIDELY FELT WITH THE GON'S HANDLING OF THE MATTER, WILL BE SO EASILY DISPOSED OF.
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